



Department of Commerce

Innovation is in our nature.

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PLANNER'S UPDATE

A monthly newsletter to share helpful information related to planning in Washington State

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Welcome to the Planner's Update, an electronic newsletter from The Department of Commerce, Growth Management Services. We send this newsletter monthly to share helpful information related to planning in Washington State.

Please feel free to send us any comments or ideas for how to make this newsletter more useful. You can also use the link below to provide additional names of planners who might like to subscribe. Please also consider sharing this newsletter with planning commissioners.

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SCHEDULES

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QUICK LINKS

www.commerce.wa.gov/growth
www.washington-apa.org
www.smartgrowth.org
www.planningpaw.org
www.mrsc.org

1. ASSESSMENT OF GREENHOUSE GAS ANALYSIS TOOLS AVAILABLE

The Department of Commerce's report, "[Assessment of Greenhouse Gas Analysis Tools](#)," is now available on our Web site. This report has been revised based on comments received during a public comment period. The report analyzes tools available for use in determining greenhouse gas emissions likely to result from the implementation of land use and transportation comprehensive plans. For more information contact Joyce Phillips at Joyce.Phillips@commerce.wa.gov.

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2. GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT AND RELATED LAWS NOW AVAILABLE

The Department of Commerce's popular publication "Growth Management Act and Related Laws – 2009 RCW Update" is now available on-line at www.commerce.wa.gov/growth on the Laws and Rules page. Due to state budget constraints, this booklet will only be available as an electronic document; no hardcopies will be printed. This is a valuable resource for local government planners, so be sure to add it to your list of website favorites!

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3. GMA WAC UPDATE NEARING COMPLETION

Commerce is finishing the final portion of its rulemaking process to update the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) provisions related to the Growth Management Act (GMA). During the public comment period, participants downloaded the proposed rule from the Web site over 7,000 times. We received 300 comments on the proposed rule.

The final rule will be adopted in late December and takes effect 31 days after adoption. The Washington Administrative Procedures Act requires a final document, called the Concise Explanatory Statement, which contains three parts:

1. a description of the overall purpose and the major issues in the adopted rule;
2. a description of all changes from the proposed rule to the adopted rule; and
3. responses to the comments received on the proposed rule.

We will also release a final project report identifying the issues raised in the process that could not be addressed with a change to the administrative rule. These are issues raised by participants that would require statutory amendments.

A follow-up process will begin in spring of 2010 to address remaining issues deferred from this round of rule making, including changes from the 2009 and 2010 legislative session.

To see the proposed rule, go to www.commerce.wa.gov/wacupdate. For more information contact: Dave Andersen at dave.andersen@commerce.wa.gov or 360.725.3052

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4. UPDATE GUIDANCE ON SHORELINES AND CRITICAL AREAS

Commerce and the Department of Ecology have updated their guidance for counties and cities regarding application of critical areas ordinances (CAOs) within shoreline jurisdictions. The agencies initially drafted guidance following the July 2008 Washington State Supreme Court decision in *Futurewise et al v. Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board et al.*, commonly known as the "Anacortes" decision. The updated guidance reflects two recent appellate court opinions and focuses on key practical questions facing local governments. Accompanying legal background information was also updated to reflect the recent court decisions. Both documents were prepared in consultation with the state Office of the Attorney General.

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Guidance is posted at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/news/reconsider.html>
Background information is at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/news/chronology.html>
For more information, please contact Tom Clingman at Ecology, tcli461@ecy.wa.gov, 360.407.7448; or
Tim Gates at the Department of Commerce, tim.gates@commerce.wa.gov, 360.725.3058.

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5. MULTI-UNIT TAX INCENTIVE REPORTS DUE IN DECEMBER

By now jurisdictions eligible to participate in the Multi-Unit Housing Tax Exemption Program (ESHB 1910) should have received a letter from Commerce reminding you of the required annual report. This legislation passed in 2007 lowers the population requirement for cities to be eligible to offer property tax exemptions for certain multi-unit housing projects. If your city has chosen to offer these property tax exemptions, you are required to report data for this calendar year (January 1 – December 31, 2009) to the Washington State Department of Commerce. The [annual reporting form](#) can be downloaded from our Web site and completed electronically. For more information, contact Ike Nwankwo at 360 725.3056 or ike.nwankwo@commerce.wa.gov

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6. ENERGY EFFICIENCY THROUGH TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANTS AWARDED

Growth Management Services (GMS) received 34 requests for almost \$3 million in Energy Efficiency through Transportation Planning (EETP) grants. The EETP grant program is a sub-grant of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. GMS awarded \$770,000 to eight projects across the state that improve coordination of land use and transportation planning, and reduce fossil fuel emissions in the transportation sector. The following projects were selected:

- The City of Bellevue will create a transit-oriented development plan for the 130th Avenue East Link light rail station.
- The Cities of Everett and Mukilteo, Snohomish County, Community Transit and Everett Transit will expand the SR99/Evergreen Way corridor planning project in support of the Swift bus rapid transit service starting in late 2009.
- The City of Mountlake Terrace will plan for a light rail station area, transit-oriented development around the station, and bicycle and pedestrian access to the station area.
- The City of Redmond will update the Redmond comprehensive plan to address energy, climate change, and sustainability.
- The City of Seattle will assess bicycle commuter facilities such as bicycle parking and shower facilities in the downtown area and will identify needed infrastructure improvements to support bicycle commuting.
- The City of Spokane and Spokane County will create a green, transit-oriented land use and transportation plan for the Sprague Corridor and conduct transportation demand management activities in support of the growth and transportation efficiency center (GTEC)
- The City of Tukwila will develop bicycle and pedestrian level of service standards and incorporate them into development review standards and public improvement plans.

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- The City of Vancouver and Clark County will revise transportation regulations to allow growth and realization of the Vancouver City Center Vision Plan, and support ongoing transportation demand management.

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7. NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCIES REFORM RECOMMENDED

Gov. Gregoire announced a plan to transform delivery of Washington state's natural resources agencies' programs. Highlights of the plan include proposed legislation to:

- Reduce three Growth Management Hearings Boards to one, within a single environment and land use hearings agency.
- Reduce five other environmental appeals boards to two, within the same agency.
- Standardize timeframes and procedures for environmental appeals (including land use).

Other actions are described in the Governor's Executive Order 09-07, including:

- Establishment of a Natural Resources subcabinet, with Department of Commerce as a member.
- The Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Parks to enhance tourism and recreational uses of the state's natural resources through an integrated marketing program.
- Development of "one front door" for customers and citizens to access information and technical assistance (permits, license approvals) and the 80 natural resource grant and loan programs.
- Natural Resource agencies to adopt common regional boundaries by July 1, 2010.
- Coordination of scientific field monitoring and data protocols.
- Expansion of Multi-Agency Permitting (MAP) Teams.

For complete information on the Natural Resource Agencies Reform process, see www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/reform/naturalresources.asp

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